District Council Report for October 2026

Councillor James Hobro
District Councillor for the parishes of Foxton, Fowlmere, Heydon, Great Chishill & Little Chishill.

I am always happy to hear from residents with any questions about these or other issues relating to the District Council. Please contact me by telephone on 07768 706670 or by email at cllr.hobro@scambs.gov.uk.

Delay to Local Government Reorganisation

On 7 September the government announced a delay in the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). For the past two years, local councils in Cambridgeshire have been preparing for the process of reorganisation into Unitary Authorities that was announced by the government in 2024. We had been working hard to meet a challenging timetable, as elections to these new authorities had been scheduled for May 2027, followed by a handover of control in 2028. This involved significant outlay of council officer time and money in preparing the business plans for the proposed new councils and preparing council operations for the anticipated handover.

The details of the delay have still not been clarified, but the information so far indicates that there will be no elections to the new Unitary Authorities in 2027 as previously planned. Instead, we are expecting the local elections scheduled for existing councils to take place next May (this includes Cambridge City Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council). The delay appears to be due to the risk of a legal challenge over some of the decisions that we had been expecting to be announced this summer.

South Cambridgeshire District Council will be submitting a compensation claim to the government to avoid the costs of the delay being borne by local taxpayers. In the meantime, the district council will focus on providing the highest quality services for a year longer than previously expected.

New tool to help Planning applicants

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has launched a new online tool called PlanX to help residents work out what permission they need for changes to their property. Planning permission may be required for some developments, but other proposals can be carried out under permitted development rights without the need for a formal planning application. The new service has been introduced to help residents access clear guidance before starting a project, without having to pay the fees associated with formal planning advice.

Six Free Trees

This year, once again, South Cambridgeshire District Council is offering Six Free Trees to parish councils across the district. Each parish may receive 6 small whips or one larger container-grown tree from a list of native species. Please apply via the Six Free Trees web page. The deadline for applications is 31 October. If you are considering a larger-scale tree planting project then the Woodland Trust's free tree packs for schools and communities offers tree packs of 15, 30, 105 or 420 saplings.

People's Emergency Briefing showings

In November 2025, the National Emergency Briefing brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and other influential people in Westminster.

The People's Emergency Briefing brings together people in local communities across the UK to hear the evidence and discuss how to respond, together with their local representatives. A live map of briefings lists showings in Thriplow, Great Shelford, Fulbourn, Hardwick and several in Cambridge during October and November. Residents are invited to a screening of the film at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne on 6 October at 6pm. The event will be followed by a discussion to consider what further action can be taken locally. Please register here.

Local Climate Action Conference 2026

The council is hosting its fourth annual Local Climate Action Conference on 6 November at Storey's Field Centre, Eddington. Please register via this link if you would like to attend.

Award for Heydon Parish Council

Congratulations to Heydon Parish Council for winning the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) Small Council of the Year award at the CAPALC Annual Conference on 18 September.

Transformation Programme secures £11.9 million in savings over 5 years

The council launched its Transformation Programme in 2020 to ensure that it could continue to deliver high-quality services despite rising demand and reduced central Government funding.

A report presented to Cabinet in September illustrates how the programme has generated efficiencies worth around £11.9 million, with more than £8.2 million directly benefiting the District Council. The rest is shared with Cambridge City Council through joint services, including Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, which is now recognised nationally for its innovative use of technology, customer focus and service performance.

Financial hardship funding of £180k secured

A package of targeted support to help low-income households facing financial hardship build long-term financial resilience has been agreed by Cabinet. The funding comes from the new Crisis and Resilience Fund, a national Government scheme. It will support a range of initiatives across South Cambridgeshire, including baby boxes for low-income households, emergency supermarket vouchers, travel support, debt reduction schemes and a savings incentive scheme.

The work of the council on tackling poverty via the Low Income Family Tracker was recognised recently with an award at the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation.